

DOE designates INL Advanced Test Reactor as a National Scientific User Facility

Photo: The ATR site

The ATR, which undergoes core internals changeouts every 8-10 years, traditionally operates more than 250 days annually.

- necessary to spur construction of the next generation of nuclear plants."

Designation of the ATR as a National Scientific User Facility can directly contribute to the development of improved products and processes, encourages innovative scientific research, and will increase U.S. scientific competitiveness. The ATR was originally built to improve nuclear reactor performance and to investigate problems with commercial reactors. As a National Scientific User Facility, the ATR offers unique domestic capabilities for nuclear fuel and reactor materials system development that industry, universities, and regulatory agencies will be able to utilize. The ATR is the only U.S. materials test reactor that can replicate multiple different reactor environments concurrently. Letters of support from universities, laboratories, industry, and other Federal programs provide strong evidence for the necessity of this program.

Idaho Senator Mike Crapo commended the U.S. Department of Energy and Battelle Energy Alliance on news that the Advanced Test Reactor at the Idaho National Laboratory has been named as a National Scientific User Facility. The designation likely means a big jump in research and study at the lab by university personnel, their students, and industry.

Idaho has a one-of-a-kind facility for nuclear research that will play a big role in determining how we meet the nations future clean energy supplies, Crapo said. Today's announcement by the DOE means the doors are open at the Idaho National Lab for the research and study that will shape our energy future. I commend the hard work by staff and management of the Advanced Test Reactor on earning this important designation. Now more than ever, Idahoans can truly say we play home to the leading nuclear research facility in the nation.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Monday, April 23, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) designated the Idaho National Laboratory's (INL) Advanced Test Reactor (ATR) as a National Scientific User Facility. Establishing the ATR as a National Scientific User Facility will help assert U.S. leadership in nuclear science and technology, and will attract new users - universities, laboratories and industry - to conduct research at the ATR. This facility will support basic and applied nuclear research and development (R&D), furthering President Bush's Advanced Energy Initiative, which will advance the nation's energy security needs.

"Clean, safe nuclear energy must be a key component of our nation's energy mix as our economy and demand for clean energy continues to grow," DOE Assistant Secretary of Nuclear Energy, Dennis Spurgeon said. "By encouraging research and development at DOE's Idaho facility, we are advancing our nation's scientific know-how

Photo: ATR cutaway

ATR cutaway

Photo: Reactor interior

For more information on the President's Advanced Energy Initiative, visit:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060131-6.html>.

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There is no other test reactor in the world with the capabilities and features of the ATR.